

Americans Want Jobs

December 11, 2009

Mr. Speaker, one in 10 Americans are without jobs this holiday season. This level of unemployment is the highest our country has seen in a quarter-century. In the midst of these difficult times, jobs are at the top of American's holiday wish list, yet the President has sent negotiators to Copenhagen to devise and deliver another job killer.

Negotiators from nations around the world convened in the Danish capital this week with the goal of developing a successor to the failed Kyoto Protocol, which sought to reduce worldwide greenhouse gas emissions. When Kyoto was negotiated, the Senate unanimously approved the Byrd-Hagel Resolution. This important resolution established U.S. policy that our country would not enter into any climate treaty that leaves out developing nations or hurts the American economy. In passing the resolution, the Senate recognized the damage such an agreement would do to the U.S. economy.

The President and his negotiators would be wise to abide by these guidelines today, as any agreement reached in Copenhagen would likely be more devastating to the American economy than Kyoto. But it's not just Copenhagen that Americans have to worry about, the President wants to pursue an environmental agenda in any way he can, including through cap and trade. In my view, the cap and trade bill, approved by the House of Representatives in June, remains one of the most damaging pieces of legislation ever passed by the House of Representatives during my time in Congress, especially as it affects agriculture and rural America.

The passage of a cap and trade bill will increase the cost of doing business in the United States, will force business owners to close their doors and will cause companies to leave the country for locations where costs are lower.

The respected Heritage Foundation studied the Waxman-Markey cap and trade bill. The study showed that the legislation would result in annual losses to GDP of almost \$400 billion and that it would lead to the loss of 1 million jobs.

At a House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Energy, and Research hearing last week, USDA's chief economist and other experts from universities across the nation all testified that the costs for fuel, fertilizer and other business inputs would increase under cap and trade, meaning more harm to businesses and the people they employ.

For example, one witness cited an Energy Information Administration analysis that showed, in 2030, the Waxman-Markey bill would raise diesel fuel costs by 15 percent, electricity costs by 22 percent and industrial natural gas costs by 26 percent. The last thing we need is another law or treaty that dashes the hope for economic recovery and that destroys more jobs, but the President continues to push for just that.

On Monday, the EPA ruled that carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases are a danger to public health and to the environment. This decision means EPA can impose greenhouse gas regulations without congressional action. This threat is no reason to pass cap and trade. We must defeat cap and trade in the Senate and then put an end to the faulty interpretation of the Clean Air Act by the EPA.

The President should refrain from entering into international agreements, and the EPA must be stopped from making decisions that are not supported by science or current law. At a time when so many Americans are without work, the President needs to focus on ways to create jobs and to improve the economy.

A cap and trade bill, EPA regulations or an international treaty, all of which are on the President's holiday wish list, would be devastating to the U.S. economy. That's a Christmas gift that no American can afford. The passage of cap and trade, an agreement in Copenhagen, clean air findings by the EPA--we can just as soon leave those presents under the Christmas tree unopened. President Obama and Speaker Pelosi, don't be the grinch that steals our Christmas.